DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 413 UD 020 257

AUTHOR McGuigan, Dorothy, Ed.
TITLE New Directions for Black Women?
INSTITUTION Michigan Univ., Ann Arbor. Center for Continuing Education for Women.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 13p.; Selected papers and excerpts from panel discussions from the conference on the "Black Woman in Transition" (Ann Arbor, MI, March 17, 1978).
JOURNAL CIT Newsletter, Center for Continuing Education of Women: vXI n1 Sum 1978

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Black Employment: *Blacks: *Educational Discrimination: *Equal Opportunities (Jobs): Family Structure: *Females: Government Role: *Racial Discrimination: *Sex Discrimination: Sex Role: Working Women

ABSTRACT

This collection of papers deals with various aspects of the black female experience in America. "The Black Woman in Transition" discusses the effects of sexism and racism on black women with particular reference to employment and education; it is noted that black women, in comparison with other groups in society, suffer a proportionately higher rate of unemployment and lay-offs, have more restricted fringe benefits, and are located in the most menial jobs. "Black Women and the Law: Equal Employment Opportunity" examines some problems in enforcing anti-discrimination legislation. "The Black Woman and Her Family in Economic Transition" explores changes within the black family with a particular focus on the changing status of the grandmother, the wife and mother, and the daughter over the last few generations. Excerpts are presented from two panel discussions: "Working Poor Female-Headed Households," and "Barriers and Strategies for Black Women in the World of Work." (Author/WP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

JAN 3 0 1980

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dorothy G. McGuigan
Center for Continuing Education of Women
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

ED182413

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

NEWSLETTER

CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION OF WOMEN

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
330 THOMPSON STREET - ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109
313: 764-6555

SUMMER 78 VOL. XI NO. 1 EDITOR: DOROTHY McGUIGAN

New Directions for Black Women?

How far have black women moved ahead in improving their educational level, their economic and social condition, in the last ten years? What is happening to the black family in America today? What about affirmative action in employment? How do recent court decisions affect the future of minority women?

These and other questions—of profound importance not only to black women but to all men and women committed to equality of opportunity—were among those aired at a conference on "Black Women in Transition" held at The University of Michigan on March 17, 1978.

The conference was sponsored jointly by the Center for Continuing Education of Women and the Office of Affirmative Action Programs.

A selection of papers from that conference is presented in these pages, together with excerpts from panel discussions. Political scientist Pauline Stone looks at the ways in which sexism—and not only racism—adversely affects black women in our society, especially in employment and education. Law Professor Harry T. Edwards examines the situation of minority women, reviews the statutes and executive orders designed to eliminate discriminatory practices in employment, and summarizes developments—especially in judicial areas—that threaten advances toward equality of opportunity. Historian Martha Brown explores changes within the black family, focussing on the changing status of the black grandmother, the black wife-mother and the black daughter across the last several generations.

The Black Woman In Transition

by PAULINE TERRELONGE STONE
Assistant Professor, Political Science, U–M

Are black women really changing, and do those changes *ipso facto* represent progress?

Ten years ago it is highly unlikely that a conference devoted solely to black women would have been convened. Chances are that a decade ago courses on black women would not have been accepted in the curricula of a prestigious university. Indeed, ten years ago you would probably never have seen a black female professor walking the hallowed halls of this university. Yes, changes have occurred.

It seems that black women are finally becoming aware that their skin color alone is not the only "mark of oppression," to use the phrase of Kardiner and Ovesey.[1] Rather, the sentiment is growing that the ascriptive factor of sex is also of tremendous importance in explaining the social situation of black women, their psychological state, their historical position. This fact, which has been staring us in the face for so long, is only now being realized by a significant number of black American women. Not all, but a significant number. The sad and ironic fact is that many black women are either blind to the way in which sexism affects their everyday lives, or for those who are able to discern its impact, are virulently opposed to accepting it.

In what ways does sexism affect black women in our society? In a multiplicity of ways, but for the sake of brevity only two will be discussed in this paper: the first and most crucial is in employment; the second is in education.

Black Women's Unemployment

Whatever statistical data relating to employment one consults, the same conclusion may be derived. Of all sexual and racial groups in our society, black women have the highest rate of unemployment, have the most restricted access to job-related fringe benefits, are located in the most menial jobs, have the highest rate of lay-offs.

Now these facts would not be so depressing if the black woman were not both black and a woman. But

UD020257

Froncell Kirkling, CEW counselor, and Jennie Partee, Office of Affirmative Action, coordinated the conference, "Black Woman in Transition."

two factors concerning the black woman render this situation particularly problematic:

1. Her income is absolutely essential for her survival and familial well-being.
2. The second factor is that a large proportion of black women are not supported by men. Moreover, even where they are supported by men, their combined income is oftentimes insufficient to meet the day-to-day expenses of living.

Because of these two facts about the black feminine condition, societal discrimination on the basis of gender is, then, not simply detrimental to the black woman, but to the entire race.

That their mother's opportunities are restricted adversely affects the children of the race, the next generation of blacks. It adversely affects the males of the race. Even though the black male income is likely

"Societal discrimination on the basis of gender is not simply detrimental to the black woman but to the entire race."

to be higher than that of his female counterpart, the fact that she makes less means that his income has to stretch further. The fact that she can't get health insurance means that he cannot afford to change jobs, or be laid off or fired. The fact that she makes less means that in their old age, there will be less coming in from Social Security. *So black men's interests are significantly affected by the operation of sexism in our society.*

What we must recognize in looking at occupational statistics is that four categories of jobs exist in America: white jobs and black jobs, male jobs and female jobs.

Black women are said to have an easier time making it in the labor force than black men because of the greater representation of black women in the professional category of the Bureau of the Census classification schema.

In 1970 11.3 percent of black females but only 5.86 percent of black males fell into the professional and technical category. So on cursory view the proportion of black female professionals appears to be double that of black male professionals. On closer inspection, however, the apparent lead of black women over black men disappears. The reason is that most of these professionals are nurses and school teachers. If we eliminate these two types of jobs—both of which are mainly female jobs—the proportion of black female professionals drops from 11.3 to 3.99 percent. If the same occupations are eliminated for black males, their percentage drops from 5.86 to 4.43 percent.

"Four categories of jobs exist in America: white jobs and black jobs, male jobs and female jobs."

Indeed, if we consider professions in terms of their social status, we see that the barriers extend to hinder black female access to many professional spheres. While black females constitute 61 percent of all black professionals, only 16 percent of black physicians and dentists are female, 23 percent of black life and physical scientists, 5 percent of black engineers, 15 percent of black judges, and 13 percent of black lawyers. When we consider female jobs a reverse situation is observable: black women are 77 percent of black school teachers, 85 percent of black librarians, and 95 percent of black nurses.

Black Women Earn Less

If we look at income, black women earn roughly 70 percent of what black men earn; in 1970 the median income for black women was $4,000 compared to $6,500 for black males. Even after adjusting for social differences, such as educational level, an income difference of $2,500 remains.

So far the picture presented is a bleak one. It is also true, however, that more opportunities exist today than twenty years ago. Whereas in 1940 black women were most heavily concentrated in domestic work, in the past 30 years, black women have moved away from domestic work toward clerical work. Today the proportion in domestic work is only 11 percent. As a result of a rapid and unprecedented expansion of lower-level white collar jobs produced by the changing labor requirements of corporations in the past 30 years, the number of female clerical workers increased 3.7 times. So black women have moved out of blue collar jobs into the white arena.

Does this change in the occupational distribution of black women mean that their relative income has improved? No; in fact the statistics reveal that their

relative income has declined in all areas, except the professional. To illustrate: in 1939 full-time women workers earned approximately 72 percent of what men earned. By 1970 black women were earning only 59 percent of what black men earned. The reason is that women are either shoved into the lowest paying jobs or else they are paid less for working at the same jobs.

Women are judged by employers to be particularly suited for clerical and service jobs chiefly for three reasons. First, because of their socialization it is assumed women prefer these jobs despite the low wages. Second, female socialization trains them to display the attitudes of docility and compliance essential to the functioning of bureaucracies. Third, because it is assumed that they are ultimately supported by men, employers feel they will not resist being shunted in or out of the economy according to its boom-and-bust cycle.

Clerical Job Demands

What is interesting about most of these female jobs is that they increasingly demand two credentials which black women have a more difficult time attaining than white women. One is a relatively high level of educatian, at least a high school diploma, and the second is the facility to read, write and to communicate verbally in mainstream English. Although not readily admitted, jobs as telephone operators, typists, secretaries, and other clericals commonly require the ability to use the language of white middle-class society. Because of their subcultural status and the low quality of education which they receive, black women historically have been at a distinct disadvantage in manipulating the cultural symbols of the larger society. Thus, the deprecatory evaluation of black linguistic patterns coupled with the institutional racism of the nation's educational system has worked to black women's disadvantage in the competition between black and white female workers over clerical jobs.

While black men are just as much victims of white ethnocentrism and poor education, their chances of escaping the effect of these forces are enhanced as racial barriers fall in certain high-paying male occupations—e.g., in the craft unions, municipal services, and in the military—which do not demand to the same degree the communication skills that are the *sine qua non* for job advancement in the clerical factor. The continued sexual stereotyping of positions in those areas that have belatedly opened up to blacks reduces the chances of black women for moving out of the traditionally female clerical jobs.

It is not only in the economic realm that sexism determines black females' life chances, and thwarts their aspirations. It also determines those chances in the educational sphere.

Socialization of Girls

Two facts about my life will serve to exemplify this point. I was suspended from high school three times in my life for not "acting like a lady." In the setting in which I was raised suspension was a very serious thing because it could last for a week to three months. Maybe the type of black sex-role socialization is different than it is in white society, but aren't all girls' options limited? Are they as encouraged as boys to play chess, excel in math and the sciences and in sports? Aren't girls socialized to be preoccupied with appearance, cooking, housework, and so forth? In sum, isn't femininity the ideal that black girls are conditioned to attain—albeit a black conception of femininity—and doesn't this have the effect of restricting their aspirations and stifling their potential?

". . . sexism determines black females' life chances . . . in the educational sphere."

It is true that black women have also been socialized to work, but this fact alone does not negate the fact that they have been raised to be women and as a result have had limited options. They have been raised to be working women, but still women.

A second fact about my personal life also serves to demonstrate how sexism operates to limit the educational achievements of black women. When I first went on the job market a few years ago, just before I attained my Ph.D., one of my professors called me into his office and said that he did not think that I should put my name on the roster for the more prestigious colleges and universities but should leave these for the other students. The reason, he said, was that I would

"he did not think that I should put my name on the roster for the more prestigious colleges and universities."

before long bring forth progeny and would therefore not take advantage of the opportunity that I had and should leave these positions for others who would pursue their careers more seriously. I should point out that I was the only female—black or white—among that particular crop of graduate students on the job market. As academic counselors are aware, the latter experience is not an anomaly. The tracking of black females into certain job categories is pervasive in our society.

It is true that black men are also victims of tracking, but the direction of the tracking is different precisely because they are men. If black women were tracked into subjects such as welding, plumbing, electrical handling, car mechanics, this would be less harmful, for these jobs at least offer greater income potential.

But black women are not tracked into subject areas such as these, but rather into areas where they will be prepared to fill those jobs that society has designated to be female.

Education of Black Women and Men

It is also true that black women are more likely to graduate from high school than black men. But this does not mean that sexism is not operative in the educational sphere. First of all, in the society at large women are more likely to have graduated from high school than men.

Moreover, formerly black women stood a better chance of graduating from college, but it is no longer true today that more black women than black men complete college. Black males have made enormous gains in attaining a college education and are better represented among those attending and graduating from college than are black women. To illustrate: in 1973, among those between the ages of 18 and 24, the proportion of black men and women enrolled in college was 19 percent and 14 percent respectively.

"The irony of the movement toward racial equality is that it has not been able to overcome sexual inequality."

So the irony of the movement toward racial equality is that it has not been able to overcome sexual inequality. Even when racial barriers fall, the opportunities are sex-typed. I would contend that part of the reason is that many of those in the forefront of the push for racial equality have failed to recognize that sexism is pervasive.

Thus, while the skyrocketing male teenage unemployment rate receives marked attention, the public pronouncements of black spokespersons rarely refer to black teenage female unemployment. While some may argue that men have greater responsibilities than women, it is important to note that 35 percent of black women were heads of households in 1974, and 40 percent of these were under 35 years of age. So the proportion of young black women who are heads of households is growing rapidly.

Sexism and the Black Woman

In view of these inequalities of the sexes in both employment and education, why have black people refrained from dealing with the issue of sexism? Why have blacks rejected the view that sexism is an important factor in explaining the condition of blacks in our society? I think that there are two reasons. For one thing, racism is so engrained in American culture, and so entrenched among many white women, that black females have been reluctant to admit that anything affecting the white female could also affect them.

A second major factor is that many black intellectuals and propagandists have refrained from dealing with the issue of sexism. The role of sexism as it affects blacks has not found fertile ground among black intellectuals largely because it has been viewed as a racially divisive issue. That is, a feminist consciousness has been regarded as a force that could generate internal conflict between black males and black females.

It is this writer's firm conviction that far from being a possible source of internecine conflict, a feminist consciousness would contribute to the welfare of the race in a variety of ways. It would enable black men and women to attain a more accurate and deeper level of understanding of many of the social problems that are currently undermining the viability of the race. Such problems as the black male unemployment rate, the absence of the black male in the family, the high "illegitimacy" rate of black women are just a few of the many social problems afflicting blacks that are, in part at least, attributable to the operation of sexism in our society. Secondly, elimination of sexism on the interpersonal level within black culture would result in persons of each sex developing their individual talents and capacities unhindered by societal definitions of appropriate behavior, thus increasing the general pool of black abilities. Finally, a feminist consciousness, in ridding black males and females of their socially-conditioned anxieties concerning masculinity and femininity, would foster greater psychological well-being and thereby strengthen the interpersonal bonds that are constantly being eroded and loosened by the impact of interpersonal sexism.

"We must begin to look at the way in which racism and sexism interact to diminish the life chances of not only black women, but of the entire race."

In summary then, for too long we have viewed the problems of black people to be solely racial in origin. For too long we have ignored the particular problems of one-half of black people, namely, black women. We can no longer do so. We must begin to look at the way in which racism and sexism interact to diminish the life chances of not only black women, but of the entire race. For sexism is not just a force that is detrimental to black women. It affects the children of these women, roughly half of whom are boys. It affects the black male because it requires him to bear responsibilities greater than he would otherwise have to. Indeed, it affects the entire race because it causes it to lose or underuse the talents and abilities of its people. A race that is as oppressed as ours cannot afford to lose anything.

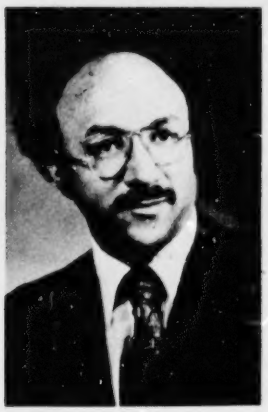
[1] Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey, *The Mark of Oppression: Exploration in the Personality of the American Negro.* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1951).

Black Women and the Law:

Equal Employment Opportunity

by HARRY T. EDWARDS
Professor of Law, U–M

One of the most persistent problems of discrimination in the United States is the denial of equal employment opportunities because of some personal characteristic, usually unalterable, which is irrelevant to the performance of a job. Race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, or handicap are the most frequently encountered bases of discrimination in employment.



Black women usually sit at the bottom of the totem pole and suffer worst in the job market because they must overcome the dual burdens of race *and* sex.

The problem of employment discrimination against black women is no small matter because the economic impact of discrimination is profound.

Although much has been said about the alleged improvement of the economic position of black families in recent years, the overall income gap between black and white families actually widened during the first half of the 1970's.

The problem of race discrimination is compounded by the continually high rate of unemployment among black workers. For example, the unemployment rate for all workers in August 1977 was 7.1 percent; however, for black workers the unemployment rate was 15.5 percent, the highest such rate since 1954.

Black Families in Poverty

The combination of low income and high unemployment among black workers has resulted in a disproportionate number of black families falling below the poverty line. In 1976 9.4 percent of all families had incomes below the poverty level, but 27.9 percent of all black families were living in poverty, compared to 7.1 percent of white families.

Not only do black women suffer from the problem of race discrimination in employment, but from sex discrimination as well. One of the worst effects of sex discrimination in employment is the reduced income of women workers. In 1974 about 70 percent of all women workers were either single, widowed, divorced, separated, or married to men making less than $10,000 per year. Yet in 1976 the median income for full-time workers by race and sex was: white males, $14,272; black males, $10,222; white females, $8,376; black females, $7,831. Thus, the incomes of white women were only about 59 percent of those of white men and 82 percent of those of black men. The income of black women, with a double burden of discrimination, was only about 55 percent of white men's income and 75 percent of black men's.

Women also have a higher unemployment rate than men. In August 1977, the unemployment rate was 8.3 percent for women and 6.3 percent for men.

The income disparities between men and women result in part from the segregation of jobs by race, sex, or national origin. Women and minorities have been traditionally channeled both by employers and societal expectations into certain kinds of jobs, typically clerical workers, nurses, teachers, and household workers. Black women have been even more restricted in job opportunities.

Discrimination in Academe

Employment discrimination within the academic community is also a grave problem, but the current figures are somewhat more mixed than those for society-at-large. The proportional underemployment of minority persons and women in academe is well recognized. For example, in institutions of higher education employing both men and women, the percentages of faculty persons who were women in 1976–77 were:

Professor	8.4 percent
Associate Professor	16.7 percent
Assistant Professor	29.7 percent

The 29.7 percent figure at the "Assistant Professor" level looks encouraging if you assume that persons in this category are recent hires on the way up in the tenure track. However, it is also noteworthy that the percentage of women at the full professor level has dropped from 10.1 percent in 1974–76 to 8.4 percent in 1976–77. This decrease may suggest that, although more women have been hired in recent years, many have failed to clear the tenure hurdle.

Black Teachers in Law Schools

A 1976 ABA survey reported approximately 3,700 full-time law professors and 485 deans and administrators teaching in law school in the United States. However, only 136 (or 3.6 percent) of the law teachers and only 29 (or 6 percent) of the administrator-teach-

ers were black. More importantly, only 36 (less than 1 percent) of the black teachers were at the level of full professor. There were 335 women in the law professor group, but only a handful of these were black. This pattern is probably typical of other professional disciplines within the academic community.

It is still clear that, as one travels up the academic ladder of success, minorities and women are still a scarce commodity. One recent national survey showed that white men held about 79 percent of the administrative positions at surveyed institutions, white women held 14 percent, minority men held 5 percent, and minority women held under 2 percent.

A number of additional figures could be cited to show significant disparities between black and white or between male and female persons—either in number of persons employed, in rank or in salary discrepancies within the academic community—but to do so would simply belabor the point. Suffice it to say that higher education is still a work place where obstacles to equal opportunity remain.

A number of scholars such as Thomas Sowell claim that existing disparities between minority and white faculty persons and between men and women can be attributed to factors other than race or sex discrimination. Sowell argues that most of these differences can be explained by the fact that there are more white than black Ph.D.s, or that large numbers of blacks are distributed in the lower paying fields of specialization, or that black faculty persons are primarily located in the South where salaries tend to be lower. In addition, Sowell asserts that "academic women more frequently subordinate their careers to their spouses' careers, or to the general well-being of their families, than do academic men." He infers that women are voluntarily less likely to advance their careers than men.

Some of what Professor Sowell says is correct, especially if one assumes that the Ph.D. is a valid criterion for measuring job performance. However, Sowell is naive in suggesting that most of the cited disparities can be attributed to factors other than discrimination. Of course it is true that black faculty have for years been confined to black institutions in the South, but geographical segregation has resulted from racial segregation in this country. It is likewise true that there are relatively few black Ph.Ds in certain fields, but we know that this is largely attributable to the fact that blacks have for years been intentionally excluded from these programs.

When one considers all the relevant data, it is safe to conclude that race and sex discrimination in employment is still a dire problem in this country. The issue then is not to define the problem but to discover a remedy.

Laws and Job Discrimination

The current panoply of statutes and executive orders prohibiting job discrimination in employment is quite varied. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against any individual on account of the individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Employment discrimination is also proscribed by the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1871. The 1866 Act (Section 1981) has recently been interpreted by the courts to provide a remedy for private acts of employment discrimination. It is narrower than Title VII in that it only applies to race discrimination cases.

The necessity for affirmative action to end discrimination has also been recognized under Executive Order 11246, which prohibits employment discrimination on the bases of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin by federal contractors.

There is also an Equal Pay Act which requires equal pay for equal work. The Equal Pay Act was passed to compel salary equity between men and women who were performing jobs that were substantially the same in terms of skill, effort and responsibility.

Given the number of anti-discrimination laws on the books, one might assume that discrimination in employment is a fast fading problem in this country. Indeed, for nearly ten years the courts were virtually unwavering in rigidly enforcing the principle of equal employment opportunity, and the proscription against employment discrimination was defined broadly to embrace numerous employment practices formerly believed to be sacrosanct. Unfortunately, some recent developments have caused some shifts in the law and these developments may portend a rocky future for those of us who are concerned about achieving equal employment opportunity.

Recent Problems in Enforcement

Some of these current developments that may indicate problem areas ahead include:

1) The proliferation of federal legislation resulting in confused, and sometimes conflicting, enforcement efforts by the federal government. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance which oversees the enforcement of the Executive Order, is not always in accord with the various departments, such as HEW, that are charged with the task of enforcing the Executive Order. In addition, the OFCC and the EEOC, which enforces Title VII, are not always in agreement in their efforts to enforce the proscription against discrimination.

2) Understaffing and underfunding of all the major federal agencies charged with enforcing anti-discrimination laws, so that such agencies are overwhelmed with huge caseloads. EEOC alone has well over 100,000 cases waiting to be processed. Equally troublesome is that a number of good people have recently become frustrated by the federal bureaucracy and have left

EEOC and other agencies to engage in private practice on the defense side of the table.

3) Recent Supreme Court decisions led by Nixon appointees on the Court, that may have a devastating impact on future efforts to enforce equal employment opportunity.

Definition of Discrimination Relaxed

First, in 1976, in *Washington v. Davis*, the Supreme Court clearly relaxed the definition of discrimination under the Civil Rights Act of 1871. Under this opinion, it is highly difficult to prove discrimination except in the most blatant cases involving intentional acts of bias. This decision has meant that the Civil Rights Act of 1871, which had been a very effective weapon to compel public officials to take affirmative action to remedy past discrimination, is no longer as useful a tool for civil rights advocates.

Second, the Supreme Court issued last term several decisions which effectively destroyed some of the most important principles developed under Title VII during the past decade. In the most important case, *Teamsters v. United States*, the Court ruled that a seniority system does not become unlawful under

"The Supreme Court issued last term several decisions which effectively destroyed some of the most important principles developed under Title VII during the past decade."

Title VII simply because it may perpetuate pre- or post-Act discrimination. This ruling was a startling setback to civil rights advocates. There is now a question as to whether the *Teamsters* decision can be read to require the nullification of affirmative action programs adopted under Executive Order 11246. One court has already ruled that an employer and union may not voluntarily adopt an affirmative action program favoring minority persons without a specific finding of discrimination under Title VII. If this ruling carries the day, affirmative action will be virtually dead in this country.

Third, the struggle over "reverse discrimination" and the *Bakke* case looms as a dark cloud on the horizon. In *Bakke*, the Supreme Court will decide this year whether a university may engage in affirmative action to bring in minority persons formerly excluded from significant positions within the academic community. Certainly the *Bakke* case is one of the most important cases that will be decided by the Court during our lifetimes.

Fourth, the Supreme Court and even a number of lower courts, have consistently failed to give full effect to the proscription against sex discrimination in employment. For example, the Supreme Court decision in *Gilbert v. General Electric* last term, which ruled that an employer was not required to give pregnancy benefits to women, must be read as being hostile to civil rights for women.

Fifth, although no one has bothered to mention it much, the courts have been firm in their reluctance to enforce equal employment opportunity at the highest levels of employment. Cases involving claims of discrimination in higher education provide the best example of this problem. In one recent case, *Johnson v. University of Pittsburgh*, the Court stated that:

"Certainly the Bakke case is one of the most important cases that will be decided by the Supreme Court during our lifetimes."

> This court is thoroughly appreciative of the important and serious issues involved in this case. On the one hand, we have the important problem as to whether sex discrimination is operating to the detriment of women in the halls of academia. Colleges and universities must understand this and guide themselves accordingly. On the other hand, we also have the important question as to whether the federal courts are to take over the matter of promotion and tenure for college professors when experts in the academic field agree that such not occur. In determining qualifications in such circumstances, the court is way beyond its field of expertise and, in the absence of a clear carrying of the burden of proof by the plaintiff, we must leave such decisions to the Ph.D.'s in academia.

If the courts are unwilling to enforce equal employment opportunity at the highest level jobs, one wonders how equal employment opportunity at these levels will be achieved.

It is hard to know for sure what the future will bring, but I am pessimistic. The *Bakke* case may answer a host of questions. Until then, we will be in a holding pattern.

Certainly minority people suffered a series of serious setbacks at the hands of the Supreme Court last year. The Court was almost cavalier in throwing away ten years of hard work that had gone into the building of a firm principle of equal employment opportunity. I do not see how this pattern can continue much longer—especially with the levels of unemployment among black people remaining so high. Something must be done soon or we will have to face some explosive human reactions from those who are consistently being denied an opportunity to support themselves and their families. Laws like Title VII were designed to deal with this problem. At the present time the evidence suggests that the laws may not be working.

The Black Woman and her Family in Economic Transition

by Martha Brown
Assistant Professor, Department of History
Central Michigan University

Role expectations of black women within the family have been modified over the years to meet changing social and economic realities. Including the slave experience the black family has passed through three distinct phases: (1) slavery to tenant farming, (2) farming to menial jobs in the city and (3) urban menial jobs to factory and white collar positions.[1]

In the move from slavery to tenancy the continuing rural life style demanded the labor of all able-bodied family members including women, children and the elderly. A few women during this phase also worked as domestics and laundresses. For many families this transition lasted well into the present century. Only relatively few families escaped tenant farming without a tenure involving several generations.

The second transition from farming into city jobs began during the Reconstruction and intensified during both world wars. In northern urban areas, the majority of working women served as domestics. By the Thirties a few had found employment in commercial laundries or similar low status jobs. Not until World War II did black women begin to gain a viable foothold in wider industrial economy.

"We are in the midst of the third transitional period . . . black women have moved from primarily menial employment to toe-hold positions in mainstream occupations and industries."

We are still in the midst of the third transitional period, which began with the expansion of wartime opportunities in the late Thirties. Since then black women have moved from primarily menial employment to toe-hold positions in mainstream occupations and industry. While this phase is still incomplete, it is probable that black families are in the urban-industrial economy to stay.

How have these major transitions affected women's activities within the family? The 1920's, midway between slavery and the present, represent a focal point useful for transitional perspectives. The activities of the Twenties reflected the results of the Great Migration of the World War I years. Using the works of the Harlem Renaissance writers as primary sources of evidence, I will briefly examine the changes in the status of the grandmother, the wife-mother and the unmarried daughter within the family as compared with the periods before and after that time.

Change in Grandmother Role

The grandmother's role has undergone the greatest change within the family in the past fifty years. During slavery and into World War I the grandmother as eldest head was of prime importance. Before Emancipation she cared for children while younger adults performed more strenuous tasks. When parents were sold off the plantations, grandmothers often assumed sole responsibility for the orphans. They continued this role into the mid-twentieth century as parents left the family farms of their own accord. Sociologist E. Franklin Frazier described these grandmothers as "guardians of the generations."[2]

"The grandmother's role has undergone the greatest change within the family in the past fifty years."

Harlem Renaissance literature gives several examples of grandmothers who headed households.[3] They became stabilizers when fathers and sometimes mothers deserted or moved away to better job opportunities. Grandmothers usually remained behind, rearing the second generation until the young joined their parents or reached maturity. Grandmothers also moved north with various family members, but without the reinforcement of rural support systems they soon lost much of their power and prestige.[4]

In the 1950s drama, *Raisin in the Sun*, author Loraine Hansberry cast Lena Younger in the same mold. Here the wage-earning grandmother seized the decision-making initiative for the three-generational household.[5] Today, while the older grandmother is still a vital part of many black households, her role is primarily that of caretaker, continuing to free younger women to take other jobs. Her caretaking role, however, is no longer on an economic par with

other family workers. Thus in the industrial society much of the grandmother's power and assertiveness have been forfeited.

The Black Wife-Mother

During slavery and into the early part of the twentieth century white families often tried to usurp priority on the maternal instincts of black women. The black mammy is still a figment of the national imagination, enshrined on pancake boxes, in late night movies and in classics like *Gone With the Wind*. This concept of black women as foster mothers to whites and custodians of others' kitchens rightfully reflects her narrow employment opportunities into the Forties.

Before World War II the black woman had few job choices, nor could she afford any luxurious indecisions about seeking outside employment. Most black families needed all the wage earners they could muster. For educated women teaching or any type of white collar job added not only money but prestige to the family. Therefore, years before their white counterparts found the idea acceptable, black women easily moved into equal partner relationships with their mates.

In many instances, the wife went beyond sharing and shouldered the larger part of the financial and psychological burdens. Examples of married female breadwinners are described repeatedly in the stories of the Harlem writers.[6] Often women who supported their mates financially were eventually deserted. Even in the slave era evidence shows that some black women separated from their husbands because in the urban

"Years before their white counterparts found the idea acceptable, black women moved into equal partner relationships with their mates"

setting the women were financially better off without them. This was true of the New England poet, Phyllis Wheatley, and of the confidante to President Lincoln's wife, Elizabeth Keckley.[7] These insights are not meant to cast aspersions on the black male, but to point out the existence of a certain continuity in the pre-industrial experience of black women. It is also significant that the practice of female financial support comes about with the move into the lower echelon jobs of the city.

Sharing or shouldering financial responsibilities made for female independence. Both black women characters and writers of the Harlem period were avant-garde in the Women's Movement, especially in their wife-mother roles. Many characters in the novels held transitional attitudes about the love of family and maintenance of the home. The more urban characters developed by women writers, however, did not always embrace the nurturing-caretaker role. Nella Larsen, in particular, wrote about the drudgery of housework and the problems and despair of women bearing too many children in too short a time. For Larsen even the bringing of children into a racist world posed an important ethical question.[8]

While the inroads of industrialization weakened the position of the black grandmother, it strengthened that of the black wife-mother in her continuing role as equal partner. Few today aspire to be like the ladies of leisure whom their grandmothers envied and waited

"Working motherhood for black women is a familiar role and offers no new threats to the family."

on in former years. Working motherhood for black women is a familiar role and offers no new threats to her family. Today's wide acceptance of the practice merely fortifies her position on the continuum.

Daughters and Single Adults

Unmarried fictional daughters in the Twenties and Thirties were socialized to carry out three traditional roles: (1) to make a living for themselves, and if necessary for other family members, (2) to find respectability and possible security through marriage, and (3) to actualize frustrated dreams and ambitions of parents. Migration into urban areas usually facilitated these role expectations.

Since unmarried black women have long been programmed for economic productivity, single women in the city soon found domestic jobs. Some seized new opportunities in the business world, such as beauty culture and stenography. Others turned to prostitution. A few prepared for artistic and teaching careers. Practically none, however, remained at home, idle by choice, living off the resources of others.

These fictional women, realizing that they must carve out a permanent place for themselves in the work force, usually demanded similar signs of ambition and responsibility from prospective mates. Although the working class women were seldom tied to the inelastic Victorian sexual codes, parents of teenagers often went to great lengths to assure respectability. Similarly in the Twenties concubinage relationships with white men were unacceptable.

The chroniclers of the "New Negro" declined to brand the black women of their day with the plantation themes of illegitimacy and concubinage with whites. But the theme in retrospect surfaced regularly, as did light-skinned, straight-haired blacks giving mute testimony to the practice.[9] The near-white fictional heroines of the Twenties simply passed for white and entered relationships ranging from casual dating to long term marriages under false pretenses. In the Harlem Renaissance years the near-white heroine

found it easy and advantageous to assume a white identity for economic and social reasons.[10] The decision to pass for white was not always motivated by the ambitions of the young women, but by the ambitions of her parents, often of the mother. This was especially true of upwardly mobile mulatto families.

Ambition of Parents

The desire to see the younger generation fulfill the dreams of the older one, however, was not limited to physical whiteness. Many black women reared in slavery or by slave parents dreamed that their female descendants would "set on high" like their white employers. Almost the only way to succeed in this ambition was through marriage to a prosperous farmer, often an older man. (One of the most affirmative stories of black love from this period portrays a heroine who finally breaks loose from the submissive and dependent wife role fostered by her grandmother's values.)[11] For the lower class respectability was often

"The black woman today is much freer to be her own black physical self, finding beauty and not despair in her Negritude"

equated with being able to feed one's own. But among characters of the rising middle class respectability meant social mobility. Therefore girls were pressured to be sexually chaste and college-trained. Chastity was encouraged not only to encourage proper suitors but as a preventive for pregnancy and resulting loss of social status and career potential.

From today's perspective the pill has done much to liberate both black and white unmarried women from the fears of unwanted pregnancies. Under the industrial economy vocational choices for black women have widened and vulnerability to sexual exploitation due to economic reasons has lessened. The black woman today is much freer to be her own black physical self, finding beauty and not despair in her Negritude. It appears certain that blacks are in the urban economy to stay, although their inroads must be increased and widened.

In summary, the grandmother has had to yield much of her power in the black family through periods of economic and social transition while the working wife and mother has gained prestige and acceptance within the wider society, where many now seek to emulate her example. The unmarried woman, with greater options than her predecessor, has been aided in establishing her own identity and aspirations. She faces the Twenty-first century more poised, proud and prepared than her mothers and grandmothers ever dreamed possible.

Working Poor Female—Headed Households

(Excerpt from panel discussion)

by JEANETTE JENNINGS
Doctoral Student, Sociology

Female-headed households with children have grown almost ten times as fast as two-parent families.

Children present a double problem for low wage female workers. The more children in the family, the higher is the probability that the family is poor. Though the presence of children increases the family's financial need, they may hinder the ability of the mother to work if child care is not available. About one half of the more than ten million children in families with income below the poverty level were in families with a female head. At the same time black women with young children are more likely to be working than are white women. In 1975 51 percent of married black women with children under the age of six were working, compared with 35 percent of white women.

The myth is prevalent that some poor women with children prefer receiving public assistance to working to support their families. The evidence does not support such a centention. State and nationwide studies of AFDC mothers found that they value work. What appears to be lack of eagerness in searching for jobs is attributed in part to the inability to achieve success and to fear of failure. Many respondents could only qualify for unskilled, irregular and menial jobs.

NOTES

[1] I am speaking in broad terms descriptive of the vast majority of black families, to which there have always been exceptions.
[2] E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1966), p. 115.
[3] See Langston Hughes, *Not Without Laughter* (orig. ed., New York: Knopf, 1930), and Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (orig. ed., Lippincott, 1937; reprint, New York: Fawcett, 1965).
[4] See Rudolph Fisher, "The Promised Land," *Atlantic Monthly* (January, 1926, 98–102) for the demise of the grandmother's power in the North.
[5] Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (New York: Random House, 1959).
[6] See Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*, and Countee Cullen, *One Way to Heaven* (New York: Knopf, 1930).
[7] Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes: or Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House* (orig. ed., New York: 1968).
[8] Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (orig. ed., New York. Knopf, 1928; reprinted, New York: Macmillan, 1971).
[9] See Langston Hughes, "Father and Son" in *The Ways of White Folks* (orig. ed., New York: Knopf, 1934; reprinted, New York: Vintage, 1971), pp. 200–248; Jessie Fauset, *Chinaberry Tree* (New York: Stokes, 1933) and Rudolph Fisher, *Walls of Jericho* (orig. ed., New York: Knopf, 1928; reprint, New York: Arno, 1969).
[10] See Jessie Fauset, *Comedy: American Style* (New York: Stokes, 1933) and Jessie Fauset, *Plum Bun* (New York: Stokes, 1929) and Nella Larsen, *Passing* (orig. ed., New York: Knopf, 1929; reprint, New York: Collier, 1967).
[11] Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

Working Poor . . .

The increasing number of female-headed households and their involvement in the labor force demands a redefinition of the working woman and her problems, and a fresh evaluation of the alternatives open to poor women to improve their economic status. New public policies to improve the lives of poor families need immediate development—including a guaranteed income scheme for families where the wage earner is incapable of earning an adequate living, full employment to insure jobs for all those willing and able to work, health insurance that is comprehensive both in terms of services and people covered, and adequate and accessible day care services.

Barriers and Strategies for Black Women in the World of Work

(Excerpt from panel discussion)

by Laurita Robinson

Asst. Personnel Administrator, Affirmative Action Officer, U–M Medical Center

While there are new thoughts on the importance of the quality of life, some institutional and social policies are still geared to the earlier value systems and beliefs. This conflict presents many frustrations and yet challenges for the career woman. Research shows that the greatest increase recently of mental depression has been among young black women, poor women who are single parents, and young married mothers who work in low-level jobs. Stress and a sense that they lack power to improve their circumstances seem to be the chief causes of low morale.

Strategies proposed for constructive change include new measures to reduce unemployment and the opening up of additional job opportunities and training; the encouragement and support of flextime and work-sharing, together with willingness to work the required hours to get the job done; continuing to work for compliance with Affirmative Action and EEO laws; and the encouragement of programs to build a supportive environment for working women.

Calendar
Summer 1978

July 18 (Tuesday). 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Beginners Computer Workshop. No fee. Registration limited.*

August 23 (Wednesday). RE-ENTRY '78, for adults returning to school. 10 a.m. to noon, information clinic on admissions, financial aid, child care resources. 12 noon to 1:30 p.m., open house brown bag lunch. All welcome.

Sept. 8 (Friday). Fall term classes—including CEW Evening Program—begin.*

* For information and details on registration, call or visit CEW.

26 Women Are Named CEW Scholars

This autumn of 1978 some 26 women ranging in age from 22 to 53 will enroll in the University as future lawyers, anthropologists, teachers, dancers, social workers, foresters, bioengineers, sharing among them $32,750 in CEW Scholarships to enable them to complete interrupted educations. The awards were given to the group of women scholars at the annual Award Night on April 20. Applications for 1979–80 Scholarships will be available October 1.

This year's CEW Scholars are:

Lucia Lee Allen, earning B.A., Anthropology
Winniefred Anthonio, earning Ph.D., Comparative Literature
Leslie Keller Eveland, earning Ph.D., Political Science
Sandra Meaney Frazee, earning B.A., Honors Psychology
Linda Mills Grant, earning Ph.D., Sociology
Shirley Woodus Harding, earning M.P.H.
Wanda Sue Henke, earning B.S.E.
Helen Margaret Hierta, earning B.A., Psychology and Education
Mary Gottshall Hodge, earning Ph.D., Anthropology
Patricia Lyons Johnson, earning Ph.D., Anthropology
Debra Diane Livingston, earning M.S., Natural Resources
Berna Mason McConnell, earning B.A., Occupational Education
Catherine Alison McIntosh, earning Ph.D., Population Planning
Carolyn Purifoy Patrick, earning Ph.D., Education
Brenda Atkin Russell, earning M.S.W.
Barbara Ann Scholz, earning B.A., Mathematics
Sandra Dee Siegelbaum, earning J.D.
Susan Williams Simon, earning M.S.W.
Jacquelyn Baas Slee, earning Ph.D., History of Art
Gail Wyatt Sydnor, earning Ph.D., Education
Lucinda Thomson, earning Ph.D., Botany
Karen L. Tishuk, earning B.A., Political Science
Diane Siegert Uchrin, earning M.B.A.
Hawea Brown Waia'u, earning M.A., Education
Kaye Wash'ington, earning J.D.
Barbara Ann Zivich, earning M.F.A.

____ Add the name below to the CEW Newsletter mailing list.
____ Remove my name from the CEW Newsletter mailing list.
____ Change my address to that below; I have enclosed my old address label.

Name_____ Date_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Women's Role in Conflict and Peace Is Theme of Newest CEW Publication

The Role of Women in Conflict and Peace, a collection of scholarly papers that examine sex roles and gender definition in relation to war, conflict, and peacemaking is the newest publication in CEW's paperback series.

The interdisciplinary collection includes studies from the fields of psychology, history, political science, and sociology. A bibliography compiled by U–M librarian Peggy Kusnerz is also included.

Among the contributors are Elizabeth Douvan on "Sex Differences in Aggression and Dominance"; Natalie Zemon Davis on "Men, Women and Violence: Some Reflections on Equality"; Louise A. Tilly on "Women and Collective Action in Europe"; Barbara J. Steinson on "The Woman's Peace Party"; Barrie Thorne on "Gender Imagery and Issues of War and Peace: The Case of the Draft Resistance Movement of the 1960's"; Berenice A. Carroll on "Feminist Politics and Peace"; Shirley A. Nuss on "The Role of Women in Underdeveloped Countries: Some Sociological Issues Concerning Conflict and Peace"; and T. E. Dielman reporting on a national survey by the Institute of Social Research, "Attitudes of Men and Women Toward Violence."

Cost of the paperback is $3.50.

Other paperback publications still available from the Center are listed below. All orders should be accompanied by a check payable to the University of Michigan.

New Research on Women and Sex Roles. Twenty-four papers from a wide range of U–M scholars. 1976. 404 pages. $5.00.

New Research on Women. Thirty papers by U–M scholars in fields ranging from anthropology to history, psychology, economics, literature. 1974. 289 pages. $4.00.

A Sampler of Women's Studies. Papers by distinguished American scholars, including Alice Rossi, Natalie Zemon Davis, Nancie Gonzalez and others. 1973. 118 pages. $3.00.

Women on Campus. Includes Matina Horner's classical study. 1971. 65 pages. $1.50.

A Dangerous Experiment: 100 Years of Women at the University of Michigan. An account of one of the first experiments in co-education. 1970. 136 pages. $2.50.

Continuing Education of Women: An Annotated Bibliography. Rev. 1978. 107 pp. $3.00.

Video Tapes. "Trigger Tapes on Undergraduate Dilemmas,' a series to stimulate group discussion among undergraduate women, and "Two Women—Twenty Years," a documentary illuminating the profound changes in women's lives across two decades, are available for loan or for purchase at cost. Both are accompanied by study guides for discussion leaders.

University of Michigan
Center for Continuing Education of Women

Staff

Jean Campbell, *Director*

Barbara Anton • Susan Arneaud • Myra Fabian
Betty Gobiel • Susan Golden • Marie Haezebrouck
Froncell Kirkling • Jean Manis • Hazel Markus
Dorothy McGuigan • Mickey Price • Cathy Spurr
Patricia Wulp

Center for Continuing Education of Women
The University of Michigan
330 Thompson Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109